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Sevenoaks Newsletter

THE NORTH WEST KENT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY, SEVENOAKS, KENT
www.nwkhfs.org.uk



NEXT BRANCH MEETING

10TH MARCH
The Great Houses of Sevenoaks
& Branch Annual Meeting
IAN WALKER

OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

BROMLEY
20TH FEBRUARY Ancestors in the Local Community
Speaker JEAN STIRK
DARTFORD
5TH MARCH - The Suffragettes
Speaker ALAN PORTER

Welcome to NWKFHS Sevenoaks Branch. In addition to the talks, we have a number of interesting tables for you to browse. These include a bookstall, old magazines and journals, exchange journals and a reference book library. Plus don't forget to take a look at our notice board.

The books from our library may be borrowed at no charge and the magazines are a snip at 20 pence each. You might just find the publication or book you are looking for.

Do visit our computer help desk where Karina will make every effort to assist with your family history brick wall.

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at Sevenoaks Community Centre, Otford Road Sevenoaks, TN14 5DN. Doors open at 7.15pm, meeting starts at 8pm. There is free car parking - and refreshments are available.

We welcome visitors and new members, and we aspire to offer all the helpful advice that you might need, we hope you enjoy your visit.

Guests we appreciate a £1.00 donation to the society's funds.

THIS EVENING'S TALK - "Private Horace Brooks of Halstead, 28th Battalion AIF" by Kyle Greenfield - The story of a courageous man and his patriotism at the time of the WW1

NEWS ITEMS -

Findmypast - United States Marriages covering 360 years of marriages from 1650-2010, when complete this collection will contain at least 100 million records and more than 450 million names from 2,800 counties across the United States. Records will continue to be added to the collection as they are obtained. There are both images and transcripts in this collection; however, some records only provide a transcript. Various marriage record types are included: applications, licenses, certificates, intentions to marry, registers, bonds, and affidavits. Based on the type of record and where it was created, the amount of available information will vary. However, most transcripts will provide the following details: Full name, Sex, Marital status, Age, Birth year, Father's full name, Mother's full name, Marriage year, Spouse's full name, Spouse's sex, Spouse's marital status, Spouse's age, Spouse's birth year, Spouse's father's full name, Spouse's mother's full name, Place and County.

Some individuals will appear multiple times in the results. This is due to the fact that occasionally several different authorities would record a marriage, which resulted in multiple records for an individual's marriage. These records, however, are not duplicates, strictly speaking; each record may contain slightly different information. Website: www.findmypast.co.uk

Thegenealogist - release 3.6 Million Norfolk Parish Records. This features the registers of baptisms, marriages, burials and banns of marriage covering the majority of parishes in Norfolk. You can search transcripts linked to the original images. Some of the surviving records are from the early 1500s. Website: www.thegenealogist.co.uk

EVENTS

20th February - Laying our Family Trees - Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Rd. EC1M 7BA

Many of us will use software programmes to produce our family trees but few of these "do it right". This session will look at the protocols used for the construction of family trees, how to use a working pedigree to aid your research and how to start to design and construct a pedigree, what information to include, abbreviations used and layout styles. An interest in calligraphy would be beneficial. Lecture with Ian Waller FSG. Time 1030 - 1300 - Price £20.00 - need to book - website: www.soq.org.uk

16TH Nov - 27th April 2016 - War in London - Exhibition - LMA, 40 Northampton Rd, Clerkenwell, EC1R 0HB

This new exhibition at LMA reveals the effects of five conflicts on Londoners and their city, from the English Civil War to the Cold War. In the year of the 100th anniversary of the Zeppelin air raids of WWI, and the 75th anniversary of the London Blitz during WW2, this exhibition uncovers historical manuscripts, maps, photographs and films that tell us about the destruction of the city, the threat of imminent invasion and the heroism of ordinary Londoners. All day free event - no need to book - contact 020 7332 3851

Local Kent Events

23rd February - Seeking That Elusive Ancestor through his work - Tunbridge Wells Family History Society, Groombridge Village Hall, Station Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9QX - by Jean Stirik. Time 7.30pm for 8pm start.

25th February - The Thompson Brothers - Sevenoaks Historical Society, The Undercroft, St Nicholas Church, Sevenoaks, TN13 1JA - A story of the First World War by Elizabeth Finn - Time 8pm, non-members £3.00

26th February - 30 Year of Bover on the Hover - Kemsing Heritage Centre, St Edith Hall, High Street, Kemsing, Kent TN15 6NA - Speaker Capt Brian Laverick-Smith -The title is a rather tongue in cheek description of his life driving the world's largest Hovercraft across the channel - Time 7.30pm, non-members £2.50

1st March - The Value of Oral History - Crowborough & District Historical Society, Pine Grove, Crowborough TN6 1FE - A talk on oral history, by Chris Hare, includes playing excerpts from interviews that he has recorded over the years and the value of this type of research to the historian. Time 7.30pm for 8pm start, non-members £4.00

2016 AGM REMINDER - The 2016 AGM is to be held at the historical Cobham Hall, near Gravesend. The meeting will be the typical all day event held on Thursday 7th April 2016, including guest speakers and weather allowing an optional walking tour by Chris Bull. There is plenty of free parking, including designated disabled spaces, and there will be transport to and from Sole Street Railway Station for those who cannot drive there. Please note that prior booking is essential. Forms are available from the Branches, the library, in December's journal & on our website where more detailed information is available. We look forward to seeing you there.



Leo Tolstoy

Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy usually referred to in English as Leo Tolstoy, was a Russian writer who is regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time. Leo Tolstoy was one of the world's pre-eminent writers becoming famous through his epic novels *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*.

He was born in 1828, at Yasnaya Polyana, a family estate 120 miles south of Moscow. Leo Tolstoy came from an aristocratic Russian family, tracing their ancestry to a mythical Lithuanian noble Indris. He was the fourth of five children of Count Nikolai Ilyich Tolstoy, a veteran of the Patriotic War of 1812, and Countess Mariya Tolstaya (Volkonskaya); he was also the fourth cousin of Alexander Pushkin. Tolstoy's parents died when he was young, so he and his siblings were brought up by relatives. In his early life, he struggled with his studies, his teachers described him as "both unable and unwilling to learn, he drifted through life ending up with large gambling debts. Fed up with his aimless meaningless life he volunteered to serve in the Russian army but his experiences as a soldier led him to become a pacifist in later life. He wrote his battlefield observations in *Sevastopol Sketches* and this raised his profile as a leading Russian writer, gaining the attention even of the current Tsar. Later looking back on these years (in his *Confessions* 1882), he bitterly regretted his misspent years.

"I cannot recall those years without horror, loathing, and heart-rending pain. I killed people in war, challenged men to duels with the purpose of killing them, and lost at cards; I squandered the fruits of the peasants' toil and then had them executed; I was a fornicator and a cheat. Lying, stealing, promiscuity of every kind, drunkenness, violence, murder — there was not a crime I did not commit... Thus I lived for ten years." – Leo Tolstoy

Tolstoy had a deep interest in seeking a greater understanding and justification of life. He travelled widely through Europe but became increasingly disenchanted with the materialism of the European Bourgeoisie. He could be argumentative with those he disagreed with such as Turgenev (widely considered the greatest Russian writer of his generation). He also developed an increasing sympathy with peasants, the poor, and those downtrodden from society. He went out of his way to help and serve them.

In 1862 he married Sofia Andreyevna Behrs, daughter of a court physician and 16 years his younger they had 13 children, eight of whom survived childhood. This marriage provided a degree of stability out of which Tolstoy wrote his great epics *War and Peace* and the novel *Anna Karenina*. *War and Peace* is breathtaking in its scope, realism and sense of history. Some characters were real historical people, others were invented. It tells a narrative of the Napoleonic wars against the backdrop of two families. Tolstoy never saw it as a novel but an epic. It suggests the necessity of making the best of life, whatever your situation.

After writing *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy underwent a change of religious and philosophical attitude. Influenced by Buddhism and Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount he developed a pacifist / anarchist philosophy; he became supportive of civil disobedience to improve the welfare of the oppressed. He noted his attitudes in 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you' and 'Confessions'.

His philosophy began to attract disciples and idealistic Tolstoy communes. He became ex-communicated from the Orthodox Church but his legacy as a writer and unique thinker were enhanced throughout the world. He gained a status as being the world's leading writer. In the evening of his life he developed a close relationship with a young Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi was very impressed with Tolstoy's belief in non-violent resistance, vegetarianism and brand of 'anarchist Christianity'.

Tolstoy died in 1910, at the age of 82. Just prior to his death, his health had been a concern of his family, who were actively engaged in his care on a daily basis. During his last few days, he had spoken and written about dying. Renouncing his aristocratic lifestyle, he had finally gathered the nerve to separate from his wife, and left home in the middle of winter and in the dead of night. His secretive departure was an apparent attempt to escape unannounced from Sophia's jealous outbursts. She was outspokenly opposed to many of his teachings, and in recent years had grown envious of the attention which it seemed to her Tolstoy lavished upon his Tolstoyan "disciples". Tolstoy died of pneumonia at Astapovo train station, after a day's rail journey south.

The police tried to limit access to his funeral procession, but thousands of peasants lined the streets. Still, some were heard to say that, other than knowing that "some nobleman had died", they knew little else about Tolstoy.

According to some sources, Tolstoy spent the last hours of his life preaching love, nonviolence, and Georgism to his fellow passengers on the train.

Sources: <http://www.biographyonline.net/writers/leo-tolstoy.html> - 08/02/2016 / http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Tolstoy - 08/02/2016

ON THIS DAY

FEBRUARY 11TH is the 42nd day of the year in the Gregorian calendar; 323 days remain until the end of the year.

- 55** Tiberius Claudius Caesar Britannicus, heir to the Roman emperors, dies under mysterious circumstances in Rome
- 1177** John de Courcy's army defeats the native Dunleavy Clan in Ulster. The English establish themselves in Ulster
- 1534** Henry VIII of England is recognized as supreme head of the Church of England
- 1790** The Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, petitions U.S. Congress for abolition of slavery
- 1794** First session of United States Senate opens to the public
- 1808** Jesse Fell burns anthracite on an open grate as an experiment in heating homes with coal
- 1919** Eva Gabor, Hungarian-American actress and singer is born (d. 1995)
- 1934** Mary Quant, English-Welsh fashion designer is born
- 1975** Margaret Thatcher becomes the first woman to head a British political party, leading the Conservatives
- 1978** Censorship: China lifts a ban on works by Aristotle, William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens
- 1990** Nelson Mandela is released from Victor Verster Prison outside Cape Town, South Africa after 27 years as a political prisoner
- 2012** Whitney Houston American singer-songwriter, producer, and actress dies (b. 1963)

Adoptions – Records of adoption in the United Kingdom are kept in various places. Before you start try to find out the person's name (and name of their parents, spouse or next of kin, where applicable) and the approximate date of the adoption order. There are no adoption registers or indexes available to see online. The National Archives does not hold any adoption records or indexes. Consult the General Register Office for information about adoption in England and Wales. The National Records of Scotland for information about adoption in Scotland and the General Register Office for Northern Ireland for information about adoption in Office Northern Ireland. Websites: Visit the Adoption Search Reunion website, which provides information for adopted people, birth relatives and adoptive parents in England and Wales. The information applies to adoptions made before 30 December 2005. Books: Read Where to find adoption records: a guide for counsellors, adopted people and birth relatives by Georgina Stafford (British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, 2001). Did you know? Formal adoption, as we now know it, did not exist in England and Wales until 1927. Before then, adoptions were usually informal. In a few cases there was some legal documentation, but no central register.

Source <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/adoptions/>

The Sevenoaks Committee

Branch Chair - Barbara Attwaters

Committee Members

Christina Barnett, Debbie Hill, Karina Jackson,
Norma Holmden, Robert Barnett, Bernie
Wilkins, Barbara Stead, Sandra Marchant